



Editorial: Long-stalled Union Station project moving along tracks

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This is an artist rendering's and blueprint of the Union Station Regional Intermodal Transportation Center planned for Springfield's old Union Station on Frank B. Murray Street. The design is by HDR, an architectural and engineering firm.

There's few buildings on the downtown Springfield landscape that are more dreary than the **Union Station**, a structure, which in its heyday, was a beautiful sight to behold. And there are few city revitalization proposals that have languished as long as those for restoring the station to its former glory.

Yet it looks as though the city is finally is moving ahead on the long-stalled project.

Last week, members of the **Springfield Redevelopment Authority** were wowed by an architect's plan to make the architectural beauty shine again. The \$83 million plan to renovate and reopen the station on Frank B. Murray Street for train and bus travel calls for preserving its

cavernous space and flooding them with natural light from the numerous windows that line its facade.

The plan also calls for a parking garage to connect to the terminal building along with 25 berths on the first floor and more than 450 parking spaces above.

The intention of the project goes far beyond restoring a single building to its former glory. The hopes are that the refurbished station will act as a magnet for further development along the Main Street corridor and provide jobs and retail outlets for a part of downtown that could use an economic shot in the arm. Also on the horizon are refurbished housing units so that those who come to work downtown may find it attractive to live there too.

Urban areas have long stopped looking for a single silver bullet to revitalize areas that have suffered decades of blight. And the Union Station proposal has been around long enough to provide a cautionary note about expecting plans to turn to reality overnight.

Still, the proposal deserves the full support of the state, city and business community as a great opportunity to

restore a grande old dame of downtown and at the same time call "all aboard" for the city's future.

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